Creative Design for Bulletin Boards
Written and illustrated by Gary and Sally Machlis

College of Forest Resources
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

National Park Service
Cooperative Park Studies Unit
Pacific Northwest Region

The inside cover of this guide is a sketch of
the Tatoosh Range in Mount Rainier National Park.
It can be removed and used in a board layout.
introduction

Bulletin boards are one of the places that park visitors go to find out things. They read bulletin boards to find out rules and regulations, or to see where the campfire is being held. They may leave a message for friends who are arriving later. Bulletin boards (and this is especially true in large campgrounds) serve as a kind of park "newspaper" and play an important part in the visitor stay.

Hence, attention should be paid to t. construction, design, and layout of par. bulletin boards. To many just-arrived visitors, bulletin boards offer a first glimpse of the Park Service "image!", and an attractive and informative boa. can be a first step toward a quality park experience.

In this guide, we offer some ideas that may be of help in improving Park Service bulletin boards. Some suggestion. may not be applicable to a particular campground or bulletin board, and some ma. need to be adapted. We hope that they spark interest and creative use of bulletin boards.

Gary and Sally Machlis
the board

The bulletin board should be sturdy and offer the display some protection from rain and harsh sunlight, either with an overhanging roof or glass door that can be locked.

They should be located near a popular area of the campground — a place where people can congregate. This may be an entrance, a loop intersection, a rest station, ranger station, or other place that is easily accessible. If near a road, space should be made available so that motorists can pull out of traffic while they use the board.
Simplicity and sturdiness are the keys to bulletin board construction, and several publications are available that offer basic building plans and ideas. They all emphasize using board designs that are compatible with natural settings.
One effective way of laying out a bulletin board is to use a modular system of displaying information. Each category of material is laid out separately with clear titles and boundaries. We suggest four main categories:

1. Rules and regulations
2. Things to do
3. Things to remember
4. Personal messages

The board might look like this:
A general and friendly welcome can be placed at the top of the board above the information.

The advantages of such a system are twofold. If changes are needed in one part of the display, other parts do not need to be altered. Also, the modular bulletin board is easy for visitors to use. Dad or Mom may go directly to the rules and regulations, while the kids read about things to do. The board looks clean and neat, and there is still plenty of room for creative ideas, pictures and designs.

To protect the layout, cover the text and drawings with clear contact paper. It is easily available at variety and hardware stores. Contact paper comes in rolls, and must be cut to the desired size. Peel the backing off and carefully lay the contact paper down on the layout, smoothing in one direction.
things to do

In this section, include activities that may be of interest to a diversity of campers—young children, teenagers, adults and senior citizens. Where is the best nearby view of Mt. Rainier? What facilities are accessible for the handicapped? Other things to do might be:

campfire talks
nature walks
church services
points of interest
nearby trails
visitor center hours

illustrate activities with photos and drawings.
rules and regulations

1. Rules should be stated clearly and briefly.

2. Explanation is more valuable than citing legal statutes or punishments, and sound rules have sound explanations.

3. If an activity is prohibited, offer alternatives if possible. If gathering firewood is not allowed, then briefly explain why and suggest the nearest place where wood can be gathered. Include a simple map and travel times.

4. A positive attitude is essential. National Parks are public trusts, and therefore belong to the people. Ask for cooperation, and make sure rules and regulations are always clear.

In another National Park, visitors entering a campground are greeted with this "bulletin board." What is the visitor's response to this presentation?
personal messages

During the summer season, a typical Park bulletin board may look like this:

Visitors use bulletin boards to rendezvous with their families or friends; to meet other campers with similar interests; to hitch a ride, or find a lost jacket.

It is important to provide for personal messages. A good method is used at Kalaloch Campground, Olympic National Park. Metal strips are attached to the board, wide enough so that 3 x 5 notecards can fit snugly between them. A waterproof box of notecards and pencils are provided. Messages can be dated and taken down after a reasonable length of time.
The board is always clean and neat, and visitors are assured that their message can be seen.
things to remember

Use the things to remember section to draw attention to important information. This might include:

1. A few selected, important rules with short explanations on why they are important.

2. Where to go for information.

3. Suggestions on the preservation and use of the campground. Visitors should be informed about campsite restoration, backcountry permits, and other similar Park Service programs.

4. Notice should be made of any special safety precautions, as well as general safety reminders.

5. Why not remind visitors that Mt. Rainier National Park is their park—both to enjoy and preserve for future generations.
live trees are not firewood

please don't feed the bears

Bears are wild animals — view them at a distance. Clean your campsite and pack away food at night.

safety reminders need not always be serious to prove their point.
1. Titles should be large and clearly lettered. Use press-on letters or trace type from books or magazines. Press-on letters are available in various sizes and styles at most art stores. Be patient, and use a ruler.

2. Information should be typed or printed clearly. Do not use all capital letters. It is difficult to read, especially for children.

3. Center the text under the titles and arrange the sections in a balanced and attractive way. Things that will interest small children should be placed near the lower part of the board.

Which arrangement is balanced?
4. It's but it's true: A picture is worth a thousand words. Sketches, photographs, maps, and cartoons all enliven a bulletin board. There is an amateur artist or photographer in almost every park staff, and most will gladly contribute their talents.

5. Use color in text, drawings, titles and background paper. It attracts the attention of the viewer, and makes the board more lively. To find good color combinations, choose colors that are neighbors on the color wheel. Neutral colors can be used with any combination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Brown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beige</td>
<td>grey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

neutral colors
Bulletin boards are an important method of presenting information to park visitors. Gary and Sally Machlis have looked at our displays, have observed visitor reaction thereto; and have made suggestions in this booklet. It is our turn now. Let's use their ideas and create better bulletin board displays. Good ones get read!

Daniel J. Tobin Jr.
Superintendent
Mount Rainier National Park